

## GLOSSARY OF PLANNING TERMS

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The following terms have been defined to increase reader understanding of this document. With regard to some terms, there is not a consensus in the planning profession on how they can be defined.

1. **Active Recreational Facilities:** Equipment and areas prepared for active use for recreational and leisure purposes, including but not limited to: playground equipment (swing sets and climbing structures); courts for basketball, volleyball, and tennis; leveled, striped fields for football, soccer, or multiple purposes; community picnic pavilions (including covered facilities with grills and/or fire rings); community buildings for recreational events, and golf courses. Trails and bikeways through open spaces are not typically considered active recreational facilities.
2. **Affordable Housing:** Housing that has a sale price or rental amount that is within the means of a household that may occupy middle-, moderate-, or low-income housing. In the case of for-sale units, housing in which mortgage, amortization, taxes, insurance and condominium or association fees, if any, constitute no more than 28 (or 30) percent of such gross annual household income for a household of the size which may occupy the unit in question. In the case of dwelling units for rent, housing for which the rent and utilities constitute no more than 30 percent of such gross annual income for a household of the size that may occupy the unit in question.
3. **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990:** The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications.
4. **Athletic Field:** defined as areas within parks designed and used specifically for active play or a team game.
5. **Brownfield:** Abandoned, idled or under-used real property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by the presence or potential presence of environmental contamination.
6. **Buildout:** A theoretical condition or imagined future that assumes development occurs on all available vacant lands at densities and intensities according to the future land use plan map, or allowed by current zoning, or both. Buildout is typically quantified by assigning a land use to each vacant parcel to be developed and multiplying the acreage of vacant land by the units per acre (residential) or floor-area ratio to determine additional housing units and square footage of non-residential development.
7. **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):** A flexible, rubber-tired rapid transit mode that combines stations, vehicles, service, running ways, and intelligent transportation system (ITS) elements into an integrated system with a positive identity and unique image. In many respects, BRT is "rubber-tired" light rail transit, but it has greater operating flexibility and potentially lower capital and operating costs than light rail.

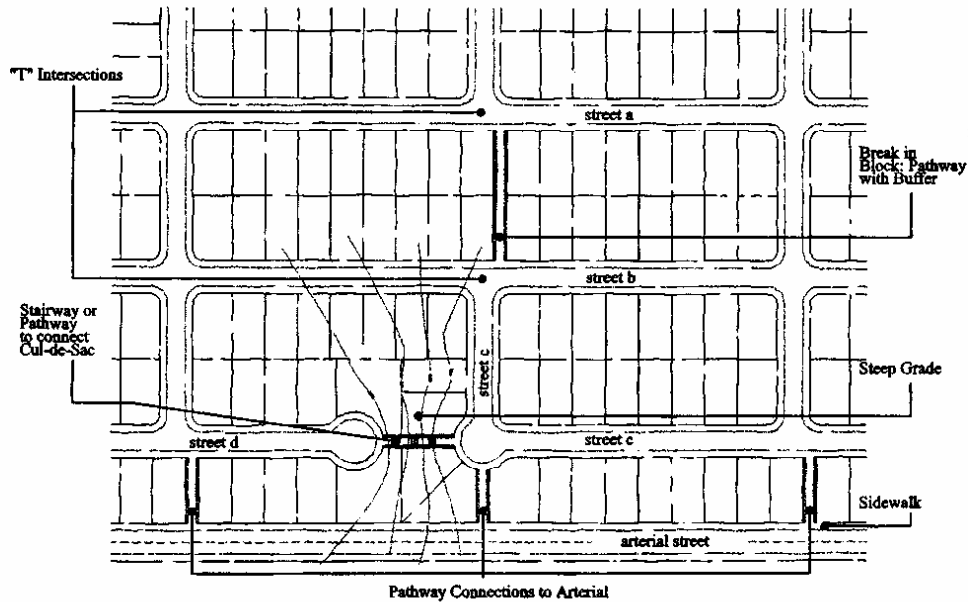
8. **Capital Improvement:** An improvement with a useful life of ten years or more, by new construction or other action, which increases the service capacity of a public facility.
9. **Capital Improvements Element:** A component of a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-8-1 et seq. which sets out projected needs for system improvements during a planning horizon established in the comprehensive plan, a schedule of capital improvements that will meet the anticipated need for system improvements, and a description of anticipated funding sources for each required improvement.
10. **Central Perimeter Job Center:** An area defined by a Georgia Tech study on affordable housing needs that identified a "job center area" which included Sandy Springs, the Perimeter Center and Dunwoody areas of DeKalb County, and a small part of Cobb County for its analysis.
11. **Character Area:** A specific geographic area within the community that: has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced (such as a downtown, a historic district, a neighborhood, or a transportation corridor; has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation (such as a strip commercial corridor that could be revitalized into a more attractive village development pattern); or requires special attention due to unique development issues (rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.). Each character area is a planning sub-area within the community where more detailed, small-area planning and implementation of certain policies, investments, incentives, or regulations may be applied in order to preserve, improve, or otherwise influence its future development patterns in a manner consistent with the community vision.
12. **Character Area Map:** A map showing character areas. Local planning requirements require a "preliminary" character area map be provided in the community assessment report. In Sandy Springs, this is referred to as the Visionary Character Areas and is made a part of the community assessment report. The Community Agenda is required to contain a character area map, which is a version of the preliminary character area map that is refined during the community participation program implementation process.
13. **Community Agenda:** The portion of the comprehensive plan that provides guidance for future decision-making about the community, prepared with adequate input from stakeholders and the general public. It includes: (1) a community vision for the future physical development of the community, expressed in the form of a map indicating unique character areas, each with its own strategy for guiding future development patterns; (2) a list of issues and opportunities identified by the community for further action; and (3) an implementation program that will help the community realize its vision for the future and address the identified issues and opportunities.
14. **Community Assessment:** The portion of the comprehensive plan that is an objective and professional assessment of data and information about the community prepared without extensive direct public participation. It includes: (1) a list of potential issues and opportunities the community may wish to take action to address, (2) evaluation of community policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with Quality Community Objectives; (3) analysis of existing development patterns, including a map of recommended character areas for consideration in developing an overall vision for future development of the community; and (4) data and information to substantiate these

evaluations and the potential issues and opportunities. The product of the Community Assessment must be a concise and informative report (such as an executive summary), to be used to inform decision-making by stakeholders during development of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

15. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):** A grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on a formula basis for entitlement communities, by the state Department of Community Affairs for non-entitled jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.
16. **Community Participation Program:** The portion of the comprehensive plan that describes the local government's program for ensuring adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.
17. **Comprehensive Plan:** A 20-year plan by a county or municipality covering such county or municipality and including three components: a Community Assessment, a Community Participation Program, and a Community Agenda. The comprehensive plan must be prepared pursuant to the local planning requirements for preparation of comprehensive plans and for implementation of comprehensive plans, established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in accordance with O.C.G.A 50-8-7.1(b) and 50-8-7.2.
18. **Connectivity:** A term that refers to the existing or future, desired state of connections that enable mobility between and among various uses and activities. Connectivity can refer to the street network, in terms of whether it provides connections (e.g., through streets), or is "disconnected" in terms of dead-end streets with cul-de-sacs.



Connected grid street network.

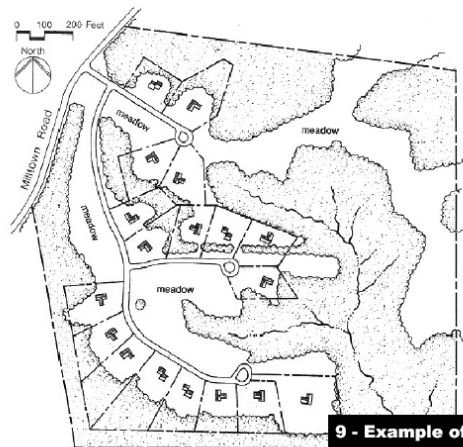


Existing neighborhoods that have cul-de-sacs and lack of sidewalks can be “retrofitted” for greater pedestrian “connectivity.”

19. **Conservation Area:** Any land set aside for conservation of the land in its natural state.

20. **Conservation Easement:** A nonpossessory interest of a holder in real property imposing limitations or affirmative obligations, the purposes of which include retaining or protecting natural, scenic, or open-space values of real property; assuring its availability for agricultural, forest, recreational, or open-space use; protecting natural resources; maintaining or enhancing air or water quality; or preserving the historical, architectural, archeological, or cultural aspects of real property. (Georgia Code Section 44-10-2)

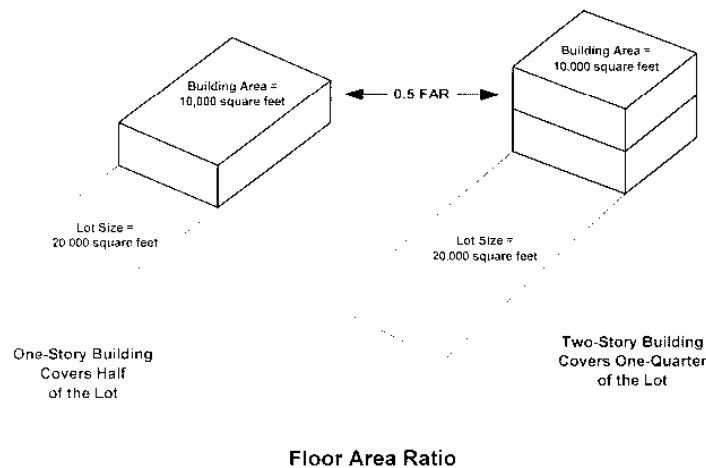
21. **Conservation Subdivision:** A subdivision where open space is the central organizing element of the subdivision design and that identifies and permanently protects all primary and all or some of the secondary conservation areas within the boundaries of the subdivision.



9 - Example of Conservation Subdivision Design

22. **Corridor:** An area of land, typically along a linear route, containing land uses and transportation systems influenced by the existence of that route.

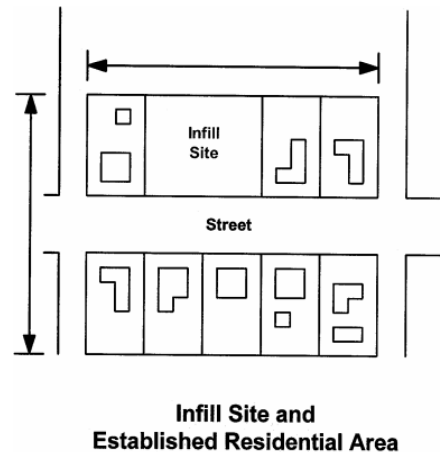
23. **Density:** The quantity of building per unit of lot area; for example, the number of dwellings per lot area (gross square foot or per acre).
24. **Design Guidelines:** Statements and illustrations that are intended to convey the preferred quality for a place.
25. **Development Impact Fee:** A payment of money imposed upon development as a condition of development approval to pay for a proportionate share of the cost of system improvements needed to serve new growth and development.
26. **Floor-Area Ratio:** The floor area of a building or buildings on a lot divided by the area of the lot.



27. **Forecast:** Judgment about the likelihood of assumptions behind a projection.
28. **Form-based Zoning:** An approach to regulating that seeks to regulate building form rather than, or in addition to, land use. It often establishes regulations based on building type and scale and character of surrounding development. Form-based codes also typically contain a "regulating plan" which identifies which building standards apply to which block frontages, building standards that set basic parameters for building height, setbacks, roof design, and fenestration, and architectural and streetscape standards.
29. **Future Land Use Plan Map:** A map showing long-term future land uses desired in the community. Such a map is "optional" in the local planning requirements. A future land use plan map will be prepared and made a part of the Community Agenda. Once prepared and adopted it will replace the future land use plan map adopted in the Sandy Springs Interim Comprehensive Plan. The future land use plan map is different from the character area map, in that it provides specific recommendations for future land uses and generally provides detail at the parcel level.
30. **Goal:** A statement that describes, usually in general terms, a desired future condition.
31. **Greenspace:** the term green space refers to the portions of a property remaining or resulting as vegetated areas' comprised largely of natural materials, free of

manufactured or man-made materials. Green space includes buffers, landscape strips, landscape islands, parks, wooded areas, trails, paths and other similar features. Both naturally passive and manicured areas may be considered green space. While trails, pathways, playgrounds and other areas “paved” with porous material may be counted as green space., the ideal medium would be mulch or some other naturally occurring material. Structures and other impervious features with continuous footprints or impervious shadows of thirty (30) square feet or less, may be counted towards the green space total for the site.

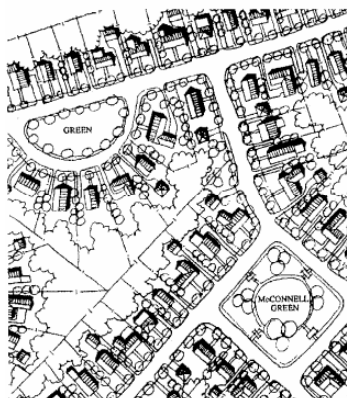
32. **Greenway:** defined as a linear park, usually including a trail or series of trails. It generally has relatively minor development. The Greenway is often used as an attempt to preserve green space in a very urban area, such as under a power line easement.
33. **Indoor Facility:** defined as any facility designed and utilized for indoor recreation activities. Includes community center, recreation center, aquatic facility, racquet courts, cultural arts center, performing arts center, arts and crafts center, museum, etc.
34. **Infill:** Development that occurs on vacant, skipped-over, bypassed, or underused lots in otherwise built-up sites or areas.
35. **Interim Comprehensive Plan:** The comprehensive plan adopted by the Sandy Springs Mayor and City Council on June 20, 2006, which contains a future land use plan map and which serves as a guide to policy. The adopted plan is “interim” because it was adopted in anticipation of serving an interim period, until a new comprehensive plan for the city can be prepared and adopted. See also definition of comprehensive plan.



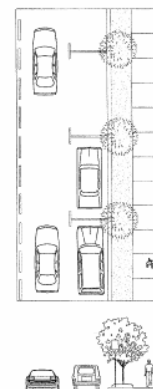
36. **Jobs/Housing Balance:** An examination of the relationship between jobs and housing, and between where jobs are or will be located and where housing is or will be available. Jobs/housing balance is often expressed in terms of a ratio between jobs and the number of housing units. The higher the jobs/housing ratio, the more jobs the area has relative to housing. A high ratio may indicate to a community that it is not meeting the housing needs (in terms of either affordability or actual physical units) of people working in the community.
37. **Land Trust:** A private, nonprofit conservation organization formed to protect natural resources, such as productive farm or forest land, natural areas, historic structures, and recreational areas. Land trusts purchase and accept donations of conservation easements. They educate the public about the need to conserve land and some provide land-use and estate planning services to local governments and individual citizens.
38. **Level of Service:** A measure of the relationship between service capacity and service demand for public facilities in terms of demand to capacity ratios or the comfort and convenience of use or service of public facilities, or both.



39. **Local Historic Preservation Ordinance:** An ordinance that identifies procedures for creating local historic districts and administering the review of building renovations or alterations to properties located within the district. It typically establishes a historic preservation commission that is charged with the review of development proposals within historic districts.
40. **Local Planning Requirements:** The standards and procedures for local government planning that shall be followed in preparation of local comprehensive plans, for implementation of local comprehensive plans, and for participation in the comprehensive planning process.
41. **Lot, Flag:** A tract or lot of land of uneven dimensions in which the portion fronting on a street is less than the required minimum width required for construction of a building or structure on that lot. Also called a panhandle lot.
42. **Mixed-Use Development:** A single building containing more than one type of land use; or a single development of more than one building and use, where the different types of land uses are in close proximity, planned as a unified, complementary whole.
43. **Mixed-Income Housing:** Housing for people with a broad range of incomes on the same site, development, or immediate neighborhood.
44. **National Register of Historic Places:** The federal government's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation, documented and evaluated according to uniform standards established by the National Park Service, which administers the program.
45. **New Urbanism:** A set of principles or school of thought that suggests neighborhoods should be built like those that existed before the advent of the automobile. Characteristics of new urbanism or new urban developments include a street network that forms a connected grid, houses built close to the street (i.e., little or no setback) with front porches, alleys (where appropriate) and garages located at the rear of the lot, and on-street parking, among others. For more information see the Charter for the New Urbanism.



Illustrative new urban or traditional neighborhood development.



On-street parking is one characteristic of "new urban" developments.

46. **Node:** A geographic area, often centered on the intersection of a highway and collector or arterial cross street, that is distinguishable from its surroundings in terms of one or more of the following, or combination thereof: (1) a mixture of land uses; (2) a higher concentration of pedestrian activity; (3) greater intensity of development; and/or (4) overall architecture of buildings or coordinated design of development.

47. **Objective:** A statement that describes a specific future condition to be attained within a stated period of time. Typically, objectives are more numerous than goals, and they are typically organized according to the topics in the goals statements.
48. **Open Space:** The term open space refers to the portions of a property not occupied by buildings, parking, drive aisles, and other similar elements dedicated to a use that does not allow for pedestrian access or congregation. While open space does include those areas incorporated as green space, open space is intended to account for areas that may be impervious and encourage pedestrian activity and congregation, such as plazas, fountains, courtyards and similar features.
49. **Overlay District:** A defined geographic area that encompasses one or more underlying zoning districts and that imposes additional requirements above those required by the underlying zoning district. An overlay district can be coterminous with existing zoning districts or contain only parts of one or more such districts.
50. **Park:** defined as publicly owned outdoor land set aside for the use of the public for recreation. Parks may be active, which include fields, athletic fields, golf courses and similar facilities designed for gathering or for contemplation. A park must be of size or complexity to be used or visited. Simple landscaping, or a single piece of sculpture would not be considered a park without being part of a larger coordinated landscape area, or series of sculpture. The park is the backbone of any recreation and park system.
51. **Passive Recreation:** Recreational activities and places that generally do not require a developed site. This generally includes such activities as hiking, horseback riding, and picnicking, provided that such activities occur in a manner that is consistent with existing natural conditions.
52. **Pedestrian-Friendly:** Physical attributes, characteristics, and designs that are intended to be more accommodating to pedestrian traffic than what is typically achieved by conventional designs.
53. **Place making:** The design of a building or area to make it more attractive to--and compatible with--the people who use it.
54. **Play ground:** defined as an active area within a park consisting of equipment designed for children to use in an interactive play environment.
55. **Projection:** A prediction of future conditions that will occur if the assumptions inherent in the projection technique prove true.
56. **Quality Community Objective (QCO):** these features of local and regional plans that incorporate desired statewide goals for growth and development. They are intended to provide guidance, or targets for local governments to achieve, in developing and implementing their Comprehensive Plan. These objectives deal with economic development, growth preparedness, educational opportunities, employment, open space preservation, transportation, housing and other important elements of a successful community.



57. **Qualified Local Government:** A county or municipality that: adopts and maintains a comprehensive plan in conformity with the local planning requirements; establishes regulations consistent with its comprehensive plan and with the local planning requirements; and does not fail to participate in the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' mediation or other means of resolving conflicts in a manner in which, in the judgment of the Department, reflects a good faith effort to resolve any conflict.
58. **Redevelop:** To demolish existing buildings or to increase the overall floor area existing on a property, or both, irrespective of whether a change occurs in land use.
59. **Redevelopment Area:** An area identified as requiring specific action by the local government for revitalization, reinvestment, and/or reuse to occur.
60. **Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria:** Those standards and procedures with respect to natural resources, the environment, and vital areas of the state established and administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8, including, but not limited to, criteria for the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountains and protected river corridors.
61. **Service Area:** A geographic area defined by a municipality, county or intergovernmental agreement in which a defined set of public facilities provides service to development within the area. Service areas shall be designated on the basis of sound planning or engineering principles, or both.
62. **Service Delivery Strategy:** The intergovernmental arrangement among city governments, the county government, and other affected entities within the same county for delivery of community services, developed in accordance with the Service Delivery Strategy Law. A local government's existing Strategy must be updated concurrent with the comprehensive plan update. To ensure consistency between the comprehensive plan and the agreed upon Strategy: (1) the services to be provided by the local government, as identified in the comprehensive plan, cannot exceed those identified in the agreed upon strategy and (2) the service areas identified for individual services that will be provided by the local government must be consistent between the plan and Strategy.
63. **Stakeholder:** Someone (or any agency or group) with a "stake," or interest, in the issues being addressed.
64. **Starter Housing:** Generally, housing that is affordable for first-time homebuyers to own. The term usually refers to detached, single-family dwellings, though it is not necessarily limited in that respect. This term may also include attached single-family and fee simple townhomes and condominiums as applicable.
65. **State Planning Recommendations:** The supplemental guidance provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to assist communities in preparing plans and addressing the local planning requirements. The plan preparers and the community must review these recommendations where referenced in the planning requirements in order to determine their applicability or helpfulness to the community's plan.

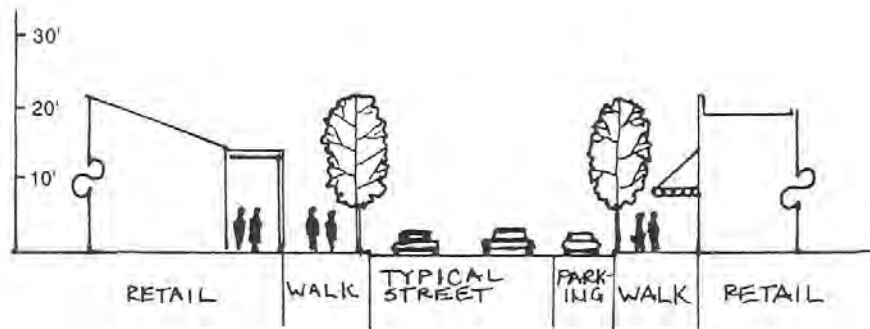
66. **Short-term Work Program:** That portion of the Implementation Program that lists the specific actions to be undertaken annually by the local government over the upcoming five years to implement the comprehensive plan.
67. **Streetscape:** The design of a street, including the roadbed, sidewalks, landscape planting, furnishings along the street, and the character of the adjacent building façade.
68. **Tax Allocation District:** (see “Tax Increment Financing”)
69. **Tax Increment Financing:** A financing technique that allows a local government or redevelopment agency to target a group of contiguous properties for improvement – a TIF district or, in Georgia, tax allocation district – and earmark any future growth in property tax revenues in the district to pay for initial and ongoing improvements there. This growth in tax revenue is the “tax increment.”
70. **Traffic Calming:** The combination of primarily physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use. Measures may include speed humps, raised crosswalks, speed tables, textured surfaces, traffic circles, and others.



Textured surfaces are one type of “traffic calming”.

71. **Trail:** defined as a path or narrow transportation-oriented corridor for the primary purpose of biking, running, walking or other non-motorized use. It may be of impervious surface, such as asphalt, or may be left in its natural state, or may be composed of wood chips, cinders or other types of natural material. Trails usually have a beginning and ending point and ideally have at least one such “trailhead.”
72. **Transit:** Bus, light rail, and heavy rail facilities. See also “Bus Rapid Transit” in this glossary.
73. **Transit-Oriented Development:** Compact development built around transit stops, especially rail transit; Development that is located within a 10-minute walk, or approximately 0.5 mile, from a light rail, heavy rail, or commuter rail station. It also includes development along heavily used bus and bus rapid transit corridors. Transit-oriented development is characterized by a mix of uses, including housing, retail, office, research, civic and other uses.
74. **Viewshed:** An area visible from a point, a line, or a specific locality. It is the visual equivalent of a watershed; the sum total of the area covered by views along a road, trail, or other point or place.

75. **Vision:** A written statement that is intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction.”
76. **Visioning:** A planning process through which a community creates a shared vision for its future.
77. **Volume-to-capacity Ratio:** A measure of the operating capacity of a roadway or intersection, in terms of the number of vehicles passing through, divided by the number of vehicles that theoretically could pass through when the roadway or intersection is operating at its designed capacity. Abbreviated as “v/c.” At a v/c ratio of 1.0, the roadway or intersection is operating at capacity. If the ratio is less than 1.0, the traffic facility has additional capacity.
78. **Walkable or Walkability:** The broad range of community design features that support walking.



79. **Workforce household:** A family or household that earns no more than eighty percent (80%) of the area’s median household income.
80. **Workforce housing:** Housing that is affordable to workforce households.

Source: Compiled by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., from various sources, including regulations prepared by the same firm, Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *A Planners Dictionary* (Michael Davidson and Fay Dolnick, Planning Advisory Service Report No. 521/522, 2004), and *Planning and Urban Design Standards*, 2006, by American Planning Association and John Wiley & Sons, Inc.